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ABSTRACT

In placing the issue of the ethics of using anthropological methods for educational evaluation in the context of scientism, anthropology and other social sciences are viewed as being in part either qualitative or quantitative. Furthermore, the difference between research and evaluation places the ethnographer in another position in relationship to those studied. Two basic categories of ethical considerations are discussed: data gathering, including loyalty and employment of the field worker, methodology, and confidentiality; and the results of data collection, including the right of review, dissemination of findings, and impact of the data. In Section B, entitled "The Interaction of Ethnics and Method," some of the ethical issues involved in designing a research methodology are dealt with. Comments are based on the experience of studying Project Follow Through using a group interview technique. (BW)

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ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Ethical Considerations in the Anthropological Evaluation of Educational Programs

Woodrow W. Clark Jr. April 1976 (AERA)

Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to highlight the contextual and processual problems in using anthropological methods to do educational evaluations. The present author has used such methods as part of the evaluation of a teacher education program at a major university. However, serious problems in both the definition and intent of anthropological methodology arise. These problems are considered below.

The paper is divided into four parts: (1) a discussion of the anthropological context for evaluation; (2) the distinction between anthropology and other qualitative methodologies; (3) a review of the ethical problems in anthropological evaluations; and (4) a critique of the anthropological methodology itself. By way of introduction, the paper does not deal specifically with lengthy examples of ethical concerns in doing ethnographic field work. That task, I leave to my co-author. Several short examples are given, here, but only as illustrations.

I will use the terms anthropologist, field worker, ethnographer and qualitative researcher somewhat the same throughout the paper. Yet I realize that there are vast differences between all these designations I will make such distinctions later. For clarity sake, however, all these terms apply to a particular kind of methodology which is considered by most scholars to be oriented towards anthropology.

The Anthropological Context

Consider the stage on which to review the use of anthropological methods in doing educational (any kind) of evaluations. In thinking about the topic, I believe that the basic issue is: what is anthropology? Is anthropology, a science or an art form? I would agree with Eric Wolf's view that anthropology is the most humanistic of the sciences. Anthropology is a science as much as psychology, sociology, or economics are sciences; they are all based upon observation, description, explanation, and prediction.

I make this assertion because a sizable number of scholars within anthropology view the discipline as "merely descriptive" or as a "higher form of journalism." Then there are even more scholars outside of anthropology who see it as not being very scientific at all. The problem has to do with what a science is and what it is not.

Most social scientists get concerned over the need for validity and reliability. Since anthropologists tend not to, then the ethnography is viewed as not being scientific. I would argue that such needs do not render a social science as being scientific. As Cicourel (1963) points out, there is indeed much to be questioned about the use and reliance of measurement in sociology. There is no such thing as value-free social science. C. Wright Mills, Ernest Becker, F. von Hayek, Irving L. Horowitz, Jules Henry, among others, provided amble proof of that.

Across disciplines, there is a growing concern for social science to be more humanistically oriented. Ironically, at UC Berkeley, the Anthropology Department appears to be headed in the opposite direction by offering a special program in quantitative measurement.

The real question is what can anthropological methods do for an evaluator that other methods can not do? Here we get to the fringe argument of the paper. If anthropological methods are defined traditionally as Malinowski, Radcliff-Brown and others suggest, then anthropology can perhaps do very little."Such methodologies are too costly" is the usual response. That is, the traditional view of "doing anthropology" requires the ethnographer to be in the field at least one year with a particular culture. However, as recent private notebooks of Malinowski's reveal, that mythical standard requirement is subject to question. Malinowski, himself, apparently wondered about the "time in the field" reqirement. Furthermore, even such a lengthy exposre, did not sensitize him to the cultures that he studied. Malinowski reveals that he hated such long field work periods, even though he imposed them upon his own students, while he equally disliked the people that he studied. He lacked sensitivity all the way around.

Nevertheless, the basic method in anthropology is participant-observation over a long period of time. If we use that standard to measure good from bad educational evaluation that ulitizes anthropological methods, then we need to reformulate exactly what other anthropological methods are being used. Perhaps a more viable distinction, than the disciplinary one, is to talk about Quantitative and Qualitative methods.

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

Within anthropology, there are ethnographers who use quantitative methods, such as surveys, questionnaires, language categories, demographic techniques, etc. These are the same methods used by most sociologists, psychologists, and economists. Qualitative

methods also cross-cut disciplines; participant-observation, group discussions, interviewing, key informants, etc. In doing educational evaluations, the quantitative methods have been the most pervasive. However, some qualitative methods are becoming increasingly popular. Apt Associates used qualitative methods in its evaluation of several experimental school projects; ETS similarly relied heavily upon such methods in its evaluations of career education programs; and a growing number of other evaluators are turning to the use of qualitative methods in evaluation and research. Far West Educational Lab is experimenting with the "ethnographic description of classrooms", while a research project at UC Berkeley uses classroom observations to measure behavior.

I will not review all the arguments for the use of one methodology over the other. My intention is simply to point out that disciplines do not constitute the differences; instead the orientation of the evaluator seems to dictate the use of one set of methods over another.

At the theoretical level, however, there is a very important distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods. The issue again revolves around the concept of what is a science? The predominant social science paradigm (Kuhn, 1968) does define science very much in the same way as the hard or natural sciences (Blumer,1975) Many anthropologists have argued that the "science of culture" too must follow that hard science model. On the contrary, I would argue that such a paradigm is not only false when applied to the study of human beings, but also destructive when attempting to understand the way people live together (Clark, 1970).

Blumer (1969) in sociology and Chomsky (1968) in linguistics have argued that the predominant social science paradigm only considers human beings as neutral organisms through which certain

factors cause predictable behaviors. Thus, the study of a person's role can predict what action an individual will take; or the understanding of one's motivations reveal their future behavior. Such arguments ignore individuals as thinking beings who interact daily with other human beings. Blumer, correctly points to the use of symbolic interaction while Chomsky notes language as evidence for human beings as thinking, interacting animals.

Most quantitative researchers would argue that they are not ignoring people in their analysis, but the evidence of their studies seems to tell another story. The deep split within sociology between the survey researchers and the symbolic interactionist demonstrates these differences. Wilson (1970) refers to the former as the"normative"paradigm and the latter as the "interpretive" paradigm. Garfinkel (1967) who coined the term "ethnomethodology"argues that quantitative research must be"indexed" or grounded in the culture of the people studied. Cicourel neatly demonstrates how this is done in a series of research studies: educational decision makers (1964), language usage (1975), and fertility in Argentine (1974). All of this research is predicated upon the theoretical need to treat people as interacting human beings rather than quantitative variables.

Another analytical distinction concerning anthropological methods must be made: the difference between research and evaluation. I have been using them coterminously; but they are not. Several research psychologists in evaluation who read my paper on "Qualitative Mehods in Educational Evaluation" (Clark, 1975) remarked: "that is not research." In other words, they felt that the qualitative research lacked the basic "scientific tenets of psychological research." They meant, of course, the paper did not discuss the use

of an experimental design with pre/post tests, control/experimental groups, and statistical procedures. While I could argue with these "scientific" assumptions, suffice it to say that the respect given to psychological methods by social scientists should be the same respect given to anthropological research methods. Few scholars question the matching control groups of the psychologist or the statistical methods of the survey sociologist. The same methodological respect should be accorded trained anthropologists in their research. As the sociologist, Herbert Blumer put it:

> Respect the nature of the empirical world and organize a methodological stance to reflect that respect (1969:60).

Nevertheless, in anthropology, there are at least three differences between research and evelaution. First, the nature of evaluation provides the researcher with a given population or a specific program. In research, the topic is the choice of the investigator. In evaluation, the subjects are there and aware of the investigator's intent to evaluate them. Secondly, the purpose of research may be to pursue an issue or problem of interest to the researcher. In evaluation, the purpose is to provide some data back to the subjects (formative) and report to the funding agency (summative). The difference can be seen in the distinction between a contract and a grant (or independent field work). The contract obligates the investigator to periodically report to the funding agency. As one fieldworker, under a contract, described the situation:

> The contract between the funding agency and the local school district strikes a devil's bargain: the funding agency will underwrite educational change, provided that the school district will allow itself to be used as a research site through the life of the project (Clinton, 1975:200).

In doing research independently or through a grant, such a "devil's bargain" need not be made. Independent research (not evaluation) does not entail periodic reports to a funding agency.

Finally, evaluation must be judgmental. By its very nature, evaluation of people and programs (their livelihood) separates out what works from what does not work. Since most evaluation follows the educational psychological paradigm of formative and summative data collection, distinct periods of judgment are set aside. In research, the investigator need not be constrained by these formal sessions or reports. Furthermore, the researcher does not judge the value of the subject or program. Instead s/he describes and attempts to understand the interaction of the people involved.

Both quantitative and qualitative researcher have the same basic constraints when doing evaluations of any kind of program. The ethical issues, however, become more pronounced for the qualitative evaluator simply because s/he is in closer contact with the people being evaluated. The consequences of the evaluation become far more personal to the evaluator. This is not to suggest that the qualitative evaluator is more subjective than the quantitative evaluator. Quite the contrary, the former is more sensitive to the everyday lives of those studied --- in terms of the total project and its effects on the people's personal lives. Such sensitivity can be much more of a valuable evaluation than the further removed and more self-subjective quantitative evaluator. It is here that the ethical issues must be carefully considered.

Ethical Issues and Results

First, consider the ethical issues involved in gathering qualitative data: loyalty, employment, methodology, and confidentiality. The most obvious ethical issue concerns the loyalty of the field worker. To whom is the ethnographer responsible? In normal research, the field worker

is ultimately responsible to him/herself. Secondly, the anthropologist is responsible to the people under study. However, as an evaluator, the priorities for responsibility have changed drastically. The ethnographer is first responsible to the funding agency; secondly, to the people studied; and finally, to him/herself. In other words, the field worker is gathering data, often confidential and sensitive, for someone else. Field notes, technically, are the property of the funding agency. The people under study, potentially, could be in great danger: loss of funding, personnel action, or private information becoming public. Loyalty becomes an important ethical issue.

Excerpts from "Guidelines for the Collection, Handling, and Use of Data" for another federally funded project which uses field workers makes the loyalty problem very clear:

> The data will be kept secure and will be used only for legitimate work to improve urban public education in accordance with the principles of these organizations.... The federal agency supporting the research must determine if the research potentially puts subjects at risk of physical, sociological, or psychological damage and if the research puts subjects in situations substantially different then their normal day to day situations.... Recent government guidelines require all federally funded projects to make available to individuals all data records which are identifiable to those persons.... While a person is employed by ..., they have responsibility to clear all publications, presentations, etc..... Also, if a site researcher quits before the documentation work is over, s/he has the obligation to share the notes with the person hired to replace him/her....(CNS,1975).

While this particular project took steps to insure the "protection of human subjects" and related data therefrom, the fact is that the field worker is ultimately responsible to the funding agency. The ethnographer must give her/his loyalty to the source of the funds and not to the people under study. The determining factor can easily become the field workers' own employment.

Another ethical issue in ethnographic evaluation, therefore, concerns

employment. The field worker who is evaluating educational programs, may appear to be "better ethically" employed because s/he has a position in educational evaluation which is often viewed as a positive non-university position. What if the field worker were asked to evaluate programs for the Army or the Navy? or for IBM? or Bank of America? In other words, are some positions more desirable and hence, more ethical, than others? In a shrinking academic job market, counter-balanced with an increasing number of trained anthropologists, some of the less desirable and ethically questionable positions for the ethnographer, as evaluator, become more appealing. Economic survival becomes part of the overall ethical issues. We could also ask the same question about the ethics of employment in education and academia themselves. What makes an university professor any more ethical? If the activists' arguments in the 1960s over relevancy, power, and the academic establishment still apply to the present day, university professors are no better ethically than they ever were. The same point applies to educational evaluators. The field worker is often met with hostility and suspicion. The people, under evaluation, often attempt to hide pertinent problems and construct elaborate obstacles for the ethnographer. In large part, the people studied are also concerned about their future employment.

The third ethical issue involving field workers in evaluation directly concerns the topic of the ethnographic method itself. As the field worker attempts to understand a program or group of people, s/he is building up trust between the program personnel and him/herself. Thus, participant-observation, as the constant research activity of the field worker in the daily activities of the program, provides the ethnographer with an intimate knowledge of the program's operation. Does the field worker report everything? no matter how damaging? How critical can

the ethnographer be? and for what reasons?

The exact rationale for ethnographic research as evaluation, that is its ability to understand the inner workings of a group of people, provide the field worker with an ethical dilemma. The ethnographer might be sympathic to the program's ideals, for example, but not to the program's actual operation. What does one do? Furthermore, the field worker is in a position of damaging individuals, the program itself, and even the funding agency. If the field worker uncovers critical data, then what happens to it? Should the program staff be alerted? Should the ethnographer make suggestions? Should the ethnographer get involved, as a participant to make corrective changes?

Finally, confidentiality, is an important aspect of ethics involving ethnographic evaluation. The issue has been suggested above, but warrants special attention. What does the ethnographer do when s/he uncovers very private information that is pertinent to the entire operation of the people studied? The problem becomes paramount in attempting to separate private from public data. However, the issue is similar to the dilemma that the ethnographer typically faces in doing any kind of field work: does one describe the ideal or real culture? The former tends to be the way that the culture is supposed to work, while the latter emphasizes how people really interact. For evaluative purposes, the ideal culture may be what the people studied want reported, while the funding agency wants to know the reality of the situation. The ethical dilemma for the field worker might once again be problematic.

Condientiality also covers the problem of who owns field notes, audio and visual tapes, as well as photos and other documents. As the statement from one organization (above) indicates, the ethnographer should be able to claim primary ownership. Yet again the issue gets complex when under contract work the money for supplies, tapes, etc. are provided by the funding agency. An ethnographer would be well

advised to be sure that these issues are clarified prior to or shortly after engaging in the field work. One partial solution suggested by some employees of the National Institute of Education in Washington, perhaps as a post-Watergate thought, is to separate data into a contract and personal file.

The second broad area of ethical issues concerns the results of qualitative data collection: the right of review, dissemination of findings, and impact of the data. The right of review is an essential issue in the ethics of educational evaluation. Once the report is in a draft form, who gets to see it? Most ethnographers would be sure to have the people studied review the data to catch misunderstandings and for clarification purposes. However, in doing evaluations, the ethnographer might find the people studied to be defensive and protective of their own interests. Hence, "cover-up" becomes a possibility when showing the report to the people who are being evaluated.

At another level, the funding agency may want to review the data before a final draft is submitted. Other colleagues and scholars may want to review the data collected. As more people review the material, the data becomes further removed from what the ethnographer actually studied, through editoral changes, academic language added, and theory impossed.

Likewise, dissemination of the findings proves to be an ethical problem. The people studied are likely to be viewed as subjects in a naturalistic experiment. The final report may indicate that or it may be constructed in the traditional anthropological manner of a case study. In either event, the language and emphasis of the report may be more reflective of the funding agency than an attempt to provide an understanding of the people interacting in a particular program.

Publication or presentation of the data to public audiences raises other dissemination concerns. The use of data gathered as part of an evaluation process takes on a different meaning if it is made public. In the first place, the people studied must be clearly aware of such an intent for the data collected. And secondly, the use of the data for a larger audience should meet with the approval of those studied, as well as the funding agency. Once the ethnographer leaves the employment of the funding agency, the issue becomes more problematic.

Finally, the impact of the evaluation upon the project becomes an ethical issue for data distribution. The ethnographer as evaluator may have some valuable ideas to suggest to the people studied. These suggestions may be based upon the data collected. But who do the suggestions go to? for what reasons? and does the ethnographer then become an advocate? The problem is that an ethnographer as an evaluator will find it difficult not to intercede in the on-going processes of the people studied. Unlike research, an evaluator should not be inserting judgmental statements about the program with the intention of changing it.

The use of formative evaluation sessions might be very appropriate for the ethnographer to provide the program with helpful ideas and suggestions. But even then, the matter becomes tricky since the people studied may not like the ideas and thereafter be suspicious of the ethnographer's role as evaluator. The personal dilemma for the ethnographer may be enough to make him or her resign the position of evaluator.

Critique of Anthropological Methods

Consider now a critical examination of anthropological methods, as part of the overall ethical concerns. The immediate issue is with the

anthropological tradition of doing pure descriptive ethnography. Anthropological research uncovers essentially the educational process' of learning one's culture. There are variations to the parameters of that process. The point is that within anthropology, there are enumerable theories which guide methodological approaches to research.

Secondly, along the same lines, descriptive analysis tends to be static. Thus a definition of education, as cultural transmission, for example, may be entirely different from the definition assumed in a particular program. As Travis Hirschi, a social psychologist, noted in discussing The Causes of Delinquency:

> The school does more than prepare students for the future. It acts also as a holding operation; it attempts to engross and involve students in activities that are or may be essentially irrevelant to their occupational futures (1969:191).

Education has been criticized on more extensive grounds. But Hirschi's point is well taken in that the researcher (evaluator) may have entirely different perspectives of the school or learning environment than other scholars as well as the participants.

The ethnographer, thirdly, who applies his/her skills to policy-oriented research runs many methodological risks. Some have been mentioned earlier, such as access to data, validity, and the degree of involvement. The problem becomes significant when the field worker receives constant, and often contradictory signals from the funding agency or the immediate intermediary organization. In doing field work, the anthropologist must be free to experiment and move without interference. But due to the constant communication, directions, and control by the outside groups, the methods can no longer be those of the individual ethnographer geared to a particular culture, program or group of people.

Ethnographic methods, themselves, can be full of serious problems. In social psychology, today, there is a trend toward using so-called ethnographic methods without really understanding what they really are and what their limitations can be? One project, that I am aware of, emphasizes what it calls the "ethnographic approach to classroom evaluation." However, unlike anthropology, the approach places "field workers" in classrooms to observe only for several days. The researchers then go on to other classrooms to do the same "field work.". A team of five such field workers (trained in a matter of days) covers eight cities and several dozen classrooms in three months. This is, of course, a perversion of what the anthropologist means by the ethnographic method. The sole purpose of such a project is to tabulate and quantify as many behavioral observations as possible. The problem is that the evaluator has not carefully considered what ethnography can and can not do. Other kinds of anthropological methods might be more useful in doing evaluative work. As noted earlier, these techniques are part of the qualitative methods found in other disciplines: interviewing, key informants, group discussions, selected problem observations, etc.

Finally, the field of anthropology has no certification process. That is, anyone could call him or herself an anthropologist. Having a Ph.D. in anthropology apparently does not restrict those who see themselves as ethnographers. This is probably just as well, but it certainly causes problems in determining who is and who is not an anthropologist. It also causes concern over the attempts to make anthropologists ethically responsible for their behavior (Berreman, 1973).

Conclusion

In summary, I have attempted to place the issue of the ethics in using anthropological methods for educational evaluation in the context of scientism. I have pointed out that anthropology and other social sciences must be viewed as being in part either qualitative or quantitative. The distinction helps clarify some of the ethical issues. Furthermore, the difference between research and evaluation places the ethnographer in another position in relationship to those studied.

I have reviewed two basic categories of ethical considerations: data gathering and the results of data collection. Within each, I have discussed the various ethical issues without offering explicit solutions. Finally, I have attempted to critique the use of anthropology as a method.

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ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

SECTION B: THE INTERACTION OF ETHICS AND METHOD

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NOTE: For the past five years the author of this section has been engaged in various government contract research efforts to describe and evaluate the Follow Through experience. Data for this section were collected in a two-year study of sponsor implementation procedures which involved field visits and interviews with practitioners located throughout the country. The research reported herein was performed at Nero and Associates, Inc., Portland, Oregon, pursuant to Contract No. SB0208(A)-73-C-107; Prime Contract No. OEC-0-73-5256 with the Office of Education, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

SECTION B: THE INTERACTION OF ETHICS AND METHOD

This section briefly outlines the methods used and ethical issues confronted in one educational research study influenced by anthropological perspectives. The purpose of the study has been to document the lessons learned by various participants in a federally-funded innovative educational program called Follow Through. The lessons learned study was one component of a larger project to describe the implementation procedures developed in Follow Through over many years of trying to translate theoretical concepts about teaching and learning into operational programs that have to work in the practical world of public schools.

The original impetus for this study came from the recognition that the people involved in the Follow Through program have had important opportunities to learn from direct experience about the difficult process of implementing innovative educational programs. The Follow Through program has a number of features that make the lessons learned from its experiences especially valuable to document. One of these is parent participation, which helps link the schools to the home and the broader community. Another feature is "planned variation," which means that a wide variety of educational approaches is represented in Follow Through, and in comparing these it is possible to discern general rules or principles of implementation that hold across diverse educational philosophies, practices and local circumstances. Participating local communities are located throughout all the States in widely differing ethnic, cultural and geographic settings. Another feature of Follow Through is the commitment of the funding agency, the U. S. Office of Education (USOE), to a longitudinal research and development

effort in which the sponsors of various educational approaches have been in continual interaction with the same local communities for up to seven years, which provides a considerably expanded time frame for experiencing the problems and achievements of educational change than the more typical short-term project allows.

Documentation of what has been learned in Follow Through is an important step in making it possible for others to draw on this knowledge. This suggests an important question: Who are these other persons for whom the documentation is produced? The attempt to answer this question involves the researcher in important methodological and ethical considerations. If the audience for the research report is defined as the academic research community, in all likelihood only a small proportion of those people interested in education will ever draw on the results, for the conventions of academic scholarship mitigate against wide readership. If, on the other hand, the audience is defined as the lay public, the conventions involved in encouraging wide readership are often labeled "unscientific" or "artistic" or "journalistic." Methods appropriate for producing information useful to academic scholars are not always appropriate for producing information useful to public school educators, parents and other citizens concerned about schools. Questions about appropriate methods cannot be fully considered without reference to ethical issues like: Who has rights to the information developed by the researchers? Who should be the target audience for the research results--academic scientists, public school educators, educational policymakers, parents, the general public?

Obviously there is no single best way to deal with issues and questions like these. The intent of this presentation is to briefly illustrate how issues like those raised in the first section of this paper operated to shape one effort to use anthropological perspectives and methods

in educational research. Certainly the intent is not to suggest that this one way of dealing with these issues is somehow the best way. The major point being developed by this example is that researchers make certain decisions based on essentially ethical considerations, and these decisions in turn influence the methods used to carry out the research. Sometimes differences of opinion about the methodological adequacy of a particular piece of research can be productively refocused by recognizing that the differences may be rooted in ethical considerations.

For example, the decision was made in the Follow Through implementation study to try to present the research results in such a way that readers with widely varied backgrounds and interests could make use of it. This decision was made on the basis of essentially ethical considerations, for the researchers held a moral belief that it is right and proper for information about a public program like Follow Through to be made available to as wide an audience as possible. In this case the researchers were encouraged by the funding agency to act on that moral belief. The fundamental decision that shaped this research project was the decision to try to make the findings available to a varied audience. This was an ethical decision that had methodological implications.

A major issue for presenting information to readers with varied characteristics is whether the study would be seen as basically descriptive or evaluative; the question is whether a descriptive study of implementation is possible without implicitly assuming an evaluative role. The research staff's perspective was that this study should try to describe the procedures used in Follow Through and it should not attempt to make judgments as to which strategies are the most effective. It was recognized, however, that any potential audience would want some kind of indication as to the effectiveness of various procedures or strategies

employed to install and maintain an innovative educational program. It was suggested that statements by participants themselves--sponsors, parents, school staff, etc.--could be relied upon as a means of reporting what was found effective and that such statements would sufficiently meet the needs of those interested in the question of effectiveness. As one consultant pointed out:

> "If we're going to try to say something about what has worked and what hasn't, that doesn't necessarily force us into a big program of classroom observation or anything of that kind. We really can rely on some descriptive statements from the people who've been involved about what worked and what didn't work."

The basically ethical premise that people can be trusted as sources of data is seen operating in this statement. One methodological implication of this ethical premise led the research staff in the direction of trying to find ways to tell the story of Follow Through as much as possible in the words of the participants themselves. It was also felt that using the natural language of participants would be an effective way to communicate with a varied audience.

The research procedures thus emphasized the discussion of the lessons participants themselves report that they have learned about implementation procedures as a result of their involvement in the Follow Through program. Although it would have been possible to derive some of these lessons from survey questionnaires and from written descriptions of training and other implementation strategies, the research staff believed that the most vital source of this kind of data was the direct, first-hand reports of Follow Through participants themselves.

The most productive strategy for collecting data on the lessons learned focused on open-ended interviews with individual practitioners and especially on group seminars.

A group of persons that held various role positions in Follow Through, such as administrators, trainers, teachers and parents would meet together in an informal seminar-like setting to talk about what they had learned from their Follow Through experiences. The field researcher would lead the seminar session in such a way as to promote a free-flowing open-ended exploration of questions such as the following:

> Imagine that a person responsible for planning a new educational program comes to you to ask your advice on how to design guidelines for the new program. Based on what you've learned in Follow Through:
>
> > How would you describe the main features of a program that influence implementation?
> >
> > What makes each feature important?
> >
> > What features are worth keeping intact?
> >
> > What should be modified or refined?
> >
> > What should be discarded altogether because it doesn't work?
>
> When asked to give a brief description of Follow Through by someone unfamiliar with the program, what features of the program do you talk about? What analogies do you use, what key stories are told, what charts are drawn, etc.?
>
> What elements could be taken away from Follow Through implementation and yet retain a viable educational change program? What are the key features--the essential features?
>
> How do you explain or account for the impact of Follow Through on the educational enterprise in Follow Through communities?
>
> How should we present information about Follow Through to others? (Format, diction, etc.)

What aspects of the educational scene do you <u>want</u> to have control over? e.g.,

- classrooms
- school buildings
- school districts
- communities
- teacher training institutions
- state departments of education
- federal agencies
- others

What, in fact, do you have control over?

What have you found impossible to control?

If you were to undertake related educational activities in a new school setting:

What conditions do you consider essential for successful implementation?

What conditions do you consider facilitating but not essential?

What conditions do you consider a hindrance to implementation?

What conditions would be certain to cause failure?

Is there anything that we have left out of the description of your program or the lessons learned that you think should be incorporated?

These seminars sometimes had several persons from the same or closely related role positions, such as a group of teachers and paraprofessional teaching assistants, and these could be as productive as those with widely varying role positions represented. The seminars sometimes lasted for about an hour, but more typically were two to three hours in length. It was often after the first hour that the group warmed fully to the task and the most useful information was developed. The groups ranged in size from two or three up to about 25, but most sessions were with five to ten persons.

In the data collection visits to the 13 sponsor home-shop organizations we typically met in the seminar format two or three times, with persons with different role positions at each. Usually one seminar session was held with those connected to the training function, such as those who design and carry out training workshops and produce training materials. Another seminar was sometimes held with those associated with the monitoring or evaluation function. Almost always there was at least one seminar with people drawn from different role positions, such as administrators, materials developers, trainers and evaluators. Seminars were also held in each of the 13 local communities visited, one associated with each sponsor. Several persons from the same role position, such as parent members of the Policy Advisory Council (PAC), would often meet together. Members of classroom teaching staffs often comprised seminar groups. Seminars with persons from various role positions usually included persons such as the local project director, the superintendent or someone else from the district central office, a principal, a local trainer, a teacher, a family outreach worker, a parent, and sometimes someone like a nurse or librarian.

Participants in these seminars often remarked to the researchers that the opportunity to look at their own operations in this kind of setting was exciting and productive. They often were led to see implications of their operations through their shared exploration of these questions which were aimed at a level of generalization considerably more abstract than their typical day-to-day interchanges. The sessions served for the participants as an opportunity to take stock of where they had come from and to do some thinking from a long-range planning perspective about where this might take them. In this sense, the lessons seminar format could be viewed as having potential

for an on-line management tool for program participants as well as being viewed as a component of a social science documentation effort.

These lessons seminars were just part of a larger project to describe Follow Through implementation procedures. The research project was begun with an information base gained from previous experiences with the Follow Through program. The author had previously served as the liaison between each sponsor organization and Stanford Research Institute, which was conducting the national evaluation of Follow Through. In a previous project at Nero and Associates, sponsor-produced materials like theoretical position papers, training manuals and evaluation instruments were collected into a library and described. For the two-year implementation study, five researchers conducted field visitations at 13 different sponsor headquarters and one local community for each sponsor. Open-ended interviews were held with about 300 people from different role positions, such as administrators, trainers, parents and teachers, about how things get done in Follow Through, and seminars were conducted with most of these participants about the lessons learned from their Follow Through experiences. Most of these interviews and seminars were recorded and approximately 100 hours of tape were transcribed, providing a data base expressed in the words of the participants themselves.

Now that the fundamental ethical premises and the resulting research procedures have been briefly outlined, the discussion can turn to how some of the other issues and questions raised by the co-author in the first section of this paper apply to this research study. The fact that five researchers shared the responsibilities of visiting 26 sites across the country meant that the traditional anthropological convention of long-term participant observation in one locality was not followed. This research stands somewhere between the intensive personal participant observation of the traditional ethnography and the extensive

impersonal survey research of the quantitative social sciences. Each field visit was several days in length, which provided some opportunity for observation of on-going activities in classrooms, advisory committee meetings, training sessions, etc., as well as for informal personal contacts with individuals outside of regular school contexts. The author was familiar with several of the sites visited because of his previous Follow Through work in them. This meant that some sites had been visited once or twice a year for about one week each over a four-year time period. So the data collection interviews and seminars were conducted by persons who had in-depth knowledge of the program being studied and warm personal relationships with many of its participants.

Perhaps the methodological approach used in this study is closest to that of oral history in that the basic data source is the recorded talk of participants about their experiences in an historical event--Follow Through. Here again, it can be seen how ethical premises interact with methodological procedures. From oral history comes support for our basic faith as human beings carrying out research that other human beings (the program participants) can and will speak truthfully and cogently about their experiences, and that yet other human beings (the readers) can learn from this speech once it is re-organized and transposed into a non-technical written form.

The basically ethical commitment to rely on the natural language of participants also has involved considerations of methodological issues explored by those interested in ordinary language philosophy. (For example, see Wittgenstein, 1953; and Cicourel, 1963.)

From ordinary language philosophy there comes a mixed attitude of restrained skepticism and profound respect toward the capabilities of everyday language. On the one hand, the mechanics of producing and making sense of everyday

linguistic utterances are so little understood by specialists that to rely on language for scientific enterprises is at most a dubious practice. On the other hand, these everyday utterances have served as the chief means for recording, manipulating and transmitting human knowledge (at least until very recently). Despite the quibbles and questions about the adequacy of ordinary language to communicate "truth," it is also the chief language used in the conduct of the educational enterprise which was, after all, the object of this inquiry.

This research project is part of the qualitative, humanistic tradition of social science. A Follow Through participant emphasized the importance of the humanist perspective in the following words:

> "A study of Follow Through has to come out of a study of the people. It has to come out talking about the people. It can't come out talking about the program and that kind of stuff, because we are not a program--we're people."

As such, it is important to consider the ethical issues raised by the co-author regarding the loyalty of the field-worker, the confidentiality of the data, the rights of review and the dissemination of the findings. These kinds of issues are related to the fact that qualitative research methods bring researchers and subjects into personal relationships as human beings. In this study the researchers have tried to deal with these issues from the basic ethical premise of trusting other persons, which also implies a concomitant ethical responsibility to be trustworthy as a human person and researcher. The ancient human precept of "doing unto others as you would have others do unto you" has served as a touchstone for considering the ethical implications of this research. Of course in the real world the potential for wise and considerate action is conditioned by limitations of perspective and options. Ethical dilemmas arise from the interactions of real world opportunities and

constraints with human intentions and understandings. In research, as in life, it is not always possible to know how to act, nor is it always possible to act in accordance with what you know. Ethical perspectives and methodological procedures are inevitably intertwined. Thus the actual conduct of this study was influenced by a kind of pragmatic ethical premise: In the world of day-to-day realities there is much virtue in simply carrying on with the business at hand, given what you believe and know how to do in the present moment, and given your willingness to learn anew and change and adapt as problems emerge.

It would not be accurate to claim that this research study utilized traditional ethnographic methods, but it seems fair to say that it was influenced by anthropological perspectives. Like anthropology, this approach to research holds that important knowledge about human affairs can be gained by observing those affairs in their natural setting and by interviewing participants about what is going on. One of the important tools for accomplishing this is the comparative method in which cultural features from one natural setting are compared to features from other settings. Using concepts like culture and social structure, anthropologists try to organize their own perceptions and those of participants into a coherent account that makes the phenomena under study somehow understandable. In this study we have visited people in the places where they live and work and have talked to them about their lives and jobs. In the effort to understand what can be known about producing change in schools, sponsor organizations and communities have been compared to each other to try to discern what cultural and social structural regularities are operating in the process of implementing innovative educational programs.

The anthropological concept of cultural relativism holds that each culture makes sense in its own terms to persons who are native to that culture, and it is

inappropriate to apply the standards of one culture to judge the worth or efficiency of another culture. In this study the concept of cultural relativism has operated much like an ethical principle in that the researchers accepted as an article of faith that there would be differences in the way the implementation processes were carried out in various communities, and that it would be possible to make sense of each local variation if we would permit local persons (the natives) to describe and explain what was happening. The concept of cultural relativism thus operated in tandem with the ethical principle of trusting persons as sources of data. The researchers felt it was inappropriate to judge the worth or efficiency of an open classroom approach to implementation with, for example, the standards applied to evaluating the impact of a behaviorist approach. However, the researchers hold the belief that persons with direct hands-on experience could speak cogently from their own experience about what worked and what didn't work.

In our interviews and observations we are also like the anthropologist in that we have tried to determine what is standard operating procedure for the people in the setting we are observing. Much of this standard operating procedure is not codified, articulated or written down. Some of it is so taken for granted by participants that it is invisible to them. The concept of culture has been likened to the image of water being invisible to the fish. Culture is the medium in which human affairs take place, just as water is the medium in which ichthyological affairs take place. Thus, anthropologists in their efforts to describe cultural phenomena sometimes appear to be concerned with matters that are obvious or taken for granted. Often it is just these matters that are so obvious and taken for granted by insiders that can be importantly illuminating to outsiders. In the case of this study, experienced Follow Through practitioners (the insiders) may be taking for granted many standard operating procedures that could be useful for others outside

the Follow Through context who are now designing or starting the process of implementing innovative educational programs. It is important to try to document what has been learned by those who have experienced first-hand the frustrations and accomplishments of trying to change schools.

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NOTE: This is a selective list of references that deal with the Follow Through program itself or with more general educational and methodological issues in a manner that importantly influenced this paper. In addition to these references, the national evaluation of Follow Through has been producing a series of technical reports under contract with Stanford Research Institute of Menlo Park, California and Abt Associates of Cambridge Massachusetts. The classroom observation studies of Jane Stallings at Stanford Research Institute address implementation issues. More information about the national evaluation results and other aspects of the Follow Through program can be obtained from:

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